

## **G325 Section B (30/50)**

### **Q11 Postmodern Media**

#### **Examiner's comments**

In relation to the mark scheme this candidate provides a response on the level 2/3 border. Explanation, analysis and argument is at the top of level 2 – there is limited ability to answer the question and the argument presented is basic and not always coherent. Examples are level 3 with some connections and proficiency, whilst the use of terminology is also level 3 with relevant media theory understood in places. There is nowhere in the response where the examiner can credit an inference of a future projection so this is also taken into account. The analysis of *The Truman Show* is credited as the historical context. The discussion areas are sound – hyper-real advertising, Baudrillard and Disney / simulation and *The Mighty Boosh* as a postmodern text. However the emphasis on textual description and the lack of balance – any discussion of the contested nature of postmodernism – prevent this response from being comfortably marked in level 3 for which a proficiency in engaging with issues and debates is required.

## Candidate answer

We are constantly immersed in media so much that we have come to blur the boundaries between media and reality. A perfect example of this is in advertising. Lynx adverts commonly feature an average man who sprays himself and then becomes immediately irresistible to women. This is highly unlikely in real life but we are sold this simulation to make us buy their product. The product is readily available to buy in shops so we can bring something from a simulation into reality, and that distorts the boundaries.

Baudrillard's theory on post-modernism explains how we are living in hyperreality. We use places like Disneyland to try to legitimise the rest of the world as truth but the rest of the world is not a truth due to the extent of media influence.

Whilst Disneyland is a real physical place it is a simulacrum. Everything is a representation and not the real thing eg people dressed in suits to look like Mickey Mouse are real in the sense they have a physical presence but are representations because of the fact they are not real mice. After having spent time being immersed in a world of Disney characters by means of watching them on TV in cartoon form where they are obviously fictional going to Disneyland confirms it as a truth because you can 'be' there, so 'it must be real right?' but by asking yourself that question you are confirming that you've blurred the boundaries between reality and representation – you believe in a false truth.

A perfect example of hyperreality is the sitcom *The Mighty Boosh* episode *The Jungle*. There is a jungle room relative to Disneyland in the sense that it is a world within a world. The characters even blur the boundary between reality and representation themselves when they bring back grated cheese from the Jungle room making the Jungle room experience seem real. The episode is hyperconscious of this fact because the fact the door to the Jungle room was locked and they couldn't get out shows there are boundaries. To get out Vince Noir blows a magic pipe and the lock dissolves into the shot to unlock the door. This shows how easy it is to overcome and blur the boundaries as they do when they return to the real world with the cheese.

The episode itself is rather subversive as such a storyline: going into a world within a world to rescue a previously thought to be dead man only to kill him yourself to save a zoo, is highly unrealistic. Sitcom storylines are meant to be about everyday life and appear to be natural to: simulate our world. *The Mighty Boosh* does nothing of this sort a prime example being Naboo, who is an enigma. He too dissolves into thin air and has magical powers. When he drops his necklace and Vince picks it up, Vince becomes hyperconscious. He puts the necklace in his pocket and the intertextual mystery drama music stops and he keeps doing this until he speaks directly into the camera to address the audience, as him and Howard do at the start of the episode to introduce the show. He is aware that he is part of a construct but has blurred the boundaries between reality and representation because one minute he is a fictional character for us to observe and then he is trying to engage us in conversation.

Vince further confuses reality with representation when he speaks to other characters in the episode. He speaks to wolves, or rather, a representation of a wolf as the use of broclage means it is in fact a man in a wolf suit. He is unaware that they are not real.

The *Truman Show* is another media text where it is clear boundaries have been distorted. The main character, Truman is living in a simulated world, nostalgic – historical of 1950s America. He is unaware of this though as it is all he knows. All the people in the city are

actors and they sometimes fall out of character and speak to the camera hyperconsciously. Just like Disneyland it is a world within a world the actors can be in but also watch at home as Truman's life was being recorded and broadcast throughout the world. For the actors the boundaries are blurred because they can travel to and from that world and for Truman they blurred when he becomes to question the nature of reality when he begins to work out what has been going on the city is both real and fake at the same time. It is his reality because it is what he always known and it is a physical place but it is fake because that world is a construct.

In the Mighty Boosh the characters also question the nature of reality in a hyperconscious way. The characters constantly ask questions like, 'we dream, but do we really dream' and it is interesting that the producers have chosen to include this.

EAA 11

EG 12

T 7

(30)